2015

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107587793.013

Leading with Mindfulness:

Exploring the Relation of Mindfulness with Leadership Behaviors, Styles, and Development

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Published in Mindfulness in Organizations: Foundations, Research, and Applications, 2015,
Cambridge University Press, Pages 256-284.
https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107587793.013

Introduction

A recent *Forbes* article stated that "Mindfulness is hot right now—Hollywood hot, Davos hot, Main Street hot…For business leaders, encouraging mindfulness is more than just being tuned in; it's a strategy to improve person and company-wide performance and productivity…." (Bruce, 2014). Leadership is a perennially trendy topic, and its fusion with mindfulness creates a combination of potential über-trendiness. But is this hype justified? Our endeavour in this chapter is to elaborate on the connections between mindfulness and leadership. A related goal is to take a critical look: generally both mindfulness and leadership are viewed in a positive light. "Leadership" evokes ideas of strengths, charisma, transformation and achievement. Yet at the same time, a "dark side" of leadership and leaders also surfaces in in the form of leader arrogance, hubris, cronyism, abusive supervision, and outright dictatorships.

Perhaps even more so than with leadership, mindfulness appears to be seen as almost universally positive. Indeed, a large number of studies have found beneficial effects of mindfulness for, among others, individual health, psychological well-being, and functioning (Eberth & Sedlmeier, 2012; Chiesa & Serretti, 2010). Also, as shown in the various chapters of this book and other work, a strong case can be made that mindfulness and mindfulness practice have substantial potential to improve the quality and outcomes of work life (see also Glomb, Duffy, Bono, Yang, 2011). Finally, empirical research on the effects of leader mindfulness provides evidence for beneficial consequences for employees including employee job performance, job satisfaction, emotional exhaustion, and need satisfaction (Reb, Narayanan, & Chaturvedi, 2014).

Although we are in broad agreement with claims regarding the benefits of mindfulness in general and for leadership in particular, at the same time, one can wonder whether there are any downsides to leaders being mindful. For example, might a more

"present" (i.e., mindful) leader be perceived as more charismatic, and could this person take advantage of the charismatic appearance in order to pursue their own political agenda at the expense of others' and organizational goals?

In this chapter we explore such questions about the "bright" and also the potentially "dark" sides of mindfulness for leaders. In addition to the theoretical importance of such questions, they are also relevant when considering the design of mindfulness training for leadership and possibly other areas such as employee wellbeing. We believe that being open to the complexities of mindfulness in leadership, rather than painting a perhaps unrealistically positive picture, will increase the chances of mindfulness surviving beyond the current buzz as a valid construct and training intervention that has implications for leadership research and practice.

In elaborating on the connections between leadership and mindfulness, we adopt an illustrative approach where we trot down paths that appear particularly interesting and have potential for major impact for research and practice. Such an approach, understandably, misses out on other worthy points of interest and convergence across these two areas, and represents an opportunity for future exploration.

Connecting Mindfulness and Leadership: Three Important Distinctions

To examine the connections between mindfulness and leadership, we make three important distinctions. First, we distinguish between several dimensions of mindfulness, such as presence, intention, and witnessing awareness. This allows us to explore whether mindfulness, when understood and practiced in certain limited or "minimalistic" ways, will not lead to an unfolding of its full potential. In fact, we will argue that it may then even support "darker" aspects of leadership, making leaders more effective in achieving unwholesome goals. In so doing, we echo some of the concerns about "McMindfulness" (Purser & Loy, 2013). This is the sense that popularized versions of mindfulness and

mindfulness practice do not faithfully present, or even entirely misrepresent, the essence of mindfulness as understood in contemplative traditions. In such traditions mindfulness practice holds a special, perhaps even sacred, space as a path to liberation and enlightenment. In contrast, “McMindfulness” stands for a limited, perhaps shallow practice of mindfulness that we believe may not provide the full benefits of a more holistic, genuine approach, and may even lead to several negative consequences, as elaborate further in this chapter.

Second, we make a distinction between the *construct* of mindfulness and mindfulness as a *practice*. As a construct, mindfulness can be seen as mental state, skill, or trait. As a practice, mindfulness involves certain formal and informal practices that have the purpose of inducing a state of mindfulness, improving mindfulness skills, or increasing trait-level mindfulness. We believe that this distinction is helpful for several reasons. First, factors other than mindfulness practice might affect state, skill, or trait levels of mindfulness. These factors could include genetics, personal development, and the work environment. For example, Reb, Narayanan, and Ho (2013) found that employees who faced more constraints on the job were less mindful and those who felt more supported were more mindful, providing empirical evidence for the influence of the work environment. Second, mindfulness practice may not always achieve its intended effects of increasing mindfulness for different reasons. For example, people may not practice consistently enough for effects to occur, or they may practice in ways that the training fails to transfer into their (work) lives, or they may practice with attitudes such as perfectionism that may increase tension and anxiety, rather than reduce it. Third, mindfulness practice may have effects apart from increasing mindfulness (e.g., reducing stress or increasing confidence) and/or effects that are not captured by current mindfulness scales, such as the setting of intentions and the persistence in implementation of these intentions. For all these reasons, it makes sense to distinguish between mindfulness and mindfulness practice.

Third, we make a distinction between intrapersonal (i.e., within the mindful/mindless individual) and interpersonal (i.e., beyond the individual and in relation to others and/or the organization) effects of mindfulness. Most existing research on mindfulness as focused on intrapersonal effects such as how mindfulness is related to stress, anxiety, or performance within the *same* person. Particularly given that our interest is in leadership, which is to a large extent an interpersonal phenomenon (Uhl-Bien, 2006), it is crucial to move beyond the intrapersonal effects of mindfulness to study the interpersonal, organizational, or even societal effects. In this chapter, we focus specifically on the interpersonal effects of leaders' mindfulness.

We are not trying to offer the one "true" definition of mindfulness. Rather than trying to resolve definitional issues of mindfulness, we treat mindfulness as an umbrella term, and then examine the potential role and consequences of the different dimensions of mindfulness for leadership. This approach has limitations; for instance we only draw on dimensions of mindfulness discussed in the modern scientific literature on mindfulness but neglect the contemplative literature.

Building on these three distinctions (dimensions of mindfulness, mindfulness as a construct versus mindfulness as a practice, and the intrapersonal versus interpersonal effects of mindfulness), in the next sections we first outline relationships between the dimensions of mindfulness to leadership behaviors; second, we explore how mindfulness may be related to three specific leadership styles (authentic, charismatic, and servant); third, we outline the relationship between mindfulness and leadership development.

Exploring the Relations between Dimensions of Mindfulness and Leadership Behaviors

Present-moment Attention

Perhaps the dimension most widely associated with mindfulness in the general public is present-moment attention. Attention to the present moment also features in most academic

definitions of mindfulness (e.g., Brown & Ryan, 2003; Bishop et al, 2004; Kabat-Zinn, 2003). Colloquially, this is often expressed as being "fully in the here and now". Present-moment attention can be contrasted with states in which attention seems to be away from the present moment, such as absent-mindedness, daydreaming, worrying about the future, or ruminating about the past. Present-moment attention can be considered a self-regulatory skill of attention regulation.

At the *intra*individual level, a variety of benefits are associated with being fully in the here-and-now. For example, increasing present-moment attention can counteract tendencies towards rumination and thereby avoiding the negative mental health outcomes associated with rumination (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Being more in the present moment could be associated with intraindividual benefits related to leader functioning, such as reduction in multi-tasking, which tends to reduce efficiency and effectiveness, and improved performance (Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005; Dalal, Bhave, & Fiset, 2014).

The benefits of present-moment attention are derived to a large extent from avoiding unhealthy and ineffective aspects of paying attention to the past or the future. These include rumination, worries, anxiety. However, not all occupation with past and future are necessarily unhealthy and some may actually be rather functional. It seems possible that a strong present-moment orientation may prevent a leaders from engaging such activities. In particular, we suggest that a strong present-moment orientation may result in too little future-oriented planning as well as past-oriented learning and reflection. While this may be beneficial for the leader's wellbeing, at least in the shorter run, at the intra-individual level, it may not be ideal from an organizational or even an individual's longer-term learning perspective. In other words, in such situations, a trade-off might exist between individual and organizational, and shorter-term and longer-term goals. Ultimately, a leader needs to find a balance between past, present, and future orientation. What proponents of mindfulness have alerted us to is that for

many of us, the imbalance exists in being too little in the presence. However, it would probably be a mistake to go to the opposite extreme and being entirely in the present.

Another possible downside of present-moment attention is a resulting depletion in self-regulatory resources. To the extent that focusing attention on the present moment requires effortful self-regulation of attention (as compared to, for example, mind wandering), it would consume limited mental resources that could then not be used for other tasks. In contrast, working on "auto pilot" or using routine behaviors, rather than mindfully, on certain tasks could save mental resources for times when they are needed (Dalal et al., 2014; Levinthal & Rerup, 2006).

At the *inter*individual effects, present-moment attention may also have positive consequences. Kahn (1992) proposes that supervisor's psychological presence at work, defined as being attentive, connected, integrated and focused, could increase employee work engagement. Thus, when leaders pay attention and are aware of the people around them, it signals interest and respect for employees. By receiving a leader's full attention, an employee may feel more acknowledged and appreciated. When followers perceive leader interest, it could possibly increase self-esteem of followers and legitimize follower concerns, which, in turn, increase follower commitment or engagement in leaders' goals. Leaders high in presence and awareness dimensions of mindfulness are likely to be influential over their followers; this presence could be natural (i.e. trait mindfulness), or cultivated (i.e., developed through mindfulness training, or utilizing a mindfulness exercise moments before meeting their audience). Contrast such "present" leaders with those who are distracted (e.g., writing emails or checking SMS) while conversing with their subordinates: "present" leaders will have higher quality relationships that may also contribute to employee well-being and performance (Reb, Narayanan, & Chaturvedi, 2013).

However, present-moment attention and respect are two distinct constructs. Crossing the two variables results in four possible combinations: present leaders who respect their employees (and are perceived as such), present leaders who do not respect (but are incorrectly perceived to, because of their presence), leaders who are not present and respect (but are not perceived to because of their lack of presence) and finally leaders who are not present with their employees and do not respect them (and are perceived as such).

As such, while leader presence (which can easily be observed by employees), may be *interpreted* by an employee as a signal of respect (which is less easily observed directly), and the employee may indeed feel respected (i.e., perceive interpersonal fairness) the leader may or may not actually respect the employee. Cunning leaders may thus use their ability to be present to create the impression of respecting and caring for their subordinates. Subordinates may, as a result, have a more favourable attitude toward the leader and may also feel a certain obligation or compulsion to reciprocate the perceived respect, for example, by acting in the leader's interest (through higher performance). In this way, a leader may use presence for selfish, political, or antisocial goals (i.e., unwholesome goals). Conversely, leaders who lack the ability to be present with their employees due to poor attention regulation, but who truly respect and care for their employees may not be perceived as such to the extent that employees use leader presence as an accessible cue to make judgments about leaders not directly observable respect (Brunswik, 1952).

In summary, we posit that present-moment attention can enable leaders to better communicate their genuine care and respect to their subordinates; and while we do believe that, overall, present-moment attention and care and respect go together and are positively correlated, this relation is not a necessary one and sometimes leaders may use their ability to be present with others to give an impression of care and respect that may not accurately

reflect their true attitudes. Empirical research could examine the prevalence of such instrumental use of presence, as well as employees' ability to notice such instances.

Another benefit to leader present-moment attention suggested by Reb et al (2013) is that it might help leaders to better understand their employees (e.g., their situation, needs, aspirations) and, as a result, be more supportive. This is because being fully present would allow a leader to notice factors about the employee that an absent-minded (or distracted) leader would not (e.g., signs of stress) (Atkins & Parker, 2012). Further, research has shown that attentive listeners have the power to shape a narrative in face-to-face communication via their nonverbal participation (Bavelas, Coates & Johnson, 2000). Attentive listening elicits more emotion-laden and information-rich narration and leaders who attend while listening may better understand what their employees are trying to communicate than leaders who are distracted. Thus, present-moment attention can have positive interindividual effects to the extent that leaders use this improved understanding to better support their employees in achieving goals, such as performing well on their assigned work tasks or helping their co-workers.

However, an improved understanding may also be exploited by a leader for unwholesome purposes. For example, becoming aware that the employee is under strong pressure to not lose the job due to financial obligations, a leader might more easily push an employee to engage in unethical actions. Thus, again, this suggests that leaders' goals are important factors to consider in combination with leaders' present-moment attention in better understanding the resulting consequences for followers.

Intentionality

Intentionality is another aspect that is considered by some scholars as essential to mindfulness. For example, Shapiro and Carlson (2009) define mindfulness as "the awareness that arises through intentionally attending in an open, caring, and discerning way"; Kabat-

Zinn (2003) also refers to mindfulness as paying attention to the present moment on purpose (i.e., with intention).

In the practice of mindfulness, intention is important at least partly because it is thought to facilitate an important element of the practice: keeping in mind, or remembering, the intention to keep one's attention focused on a particular stimulus such as the breath, as well as remembering to return one's attention to the breath when it has wandered away.

It is easy to see how keeping one's intentions in mind can be beneficial far beyond meditation practice. Good intentions, such as eating more healthily or abstemiously, for example, are easily "crowded out" as the mind is occupied with various information processing activities, such as worrying about problems. However, without holding one's intentions in mind, it is easy to make the wrong choices, in the sense of choices that are inconsistent with one's intentions (e.g., snacking mindlessly).

Similarly, leaders who might get easily overwhelmed by the myriad demands on their attention might find it valuable to learn how to hold onto their intentions. Effective leadership can be viewed as the ability to attain organizational goals through influencing others. Given that the organization presents a dynamic environment with multiple stakeholders, there are potentially many issues that could redirect attention from organizational goals. While some of these issues legitimately deserve attention and require action, it may often be more important for the leader to maintain attentional focus on the goal at hand. In addition, the complexity of the organization means that enacting organizational change, one of the prime tasks of leaders, requires both persistence in the face of obstacles and time. For leaders who need to adhere to intentions (e.g., enacting certain behaviors to change corporate culture, motivating employees), the ability to bring attention back to their intention may be hugely valuable. Thus, mindfulness, in the form of being focused, and refocusing, on purpose and goals, seems fundamental to effective leadership.

So far we have focused on the process of remembering intentions. However, the content of intentions is also important. When the content of intention is "wholesome" (e.g., prosocial), mindfulness, in the sense of the ability to remember intentions moment-to-moment, would be beneficial as it aids the implementation of these intentions. However, when intentions are unwholesome (e.g., antisocial), *mindlessness* arguably would be more desirable from a societal perspective, as it makes the implementation of such intentions less likely (it may be worth noting that less likely does not mean impossible, as intentions and goals can also be pursued without conscious awareness). Thus, as with mindfulness as present-moment awareness, mindfulness as the ability to remember one's intentions could be understood as a self-regulatory skill and resource that is best viewed together with the leader's values, goals, and intentions to better understand its consequences and whether they are desirable not only for the individual but also for the organization.

Attitude of Self-compassion

Another important dimension referred to in particular in mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) such as MBSR and Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT; Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2013) is self-compassion. As mentioned above, in mindfulness meditation, the mind often wanders away from the object of attention (e.g., the breath). It is the function of intention to return attention to the breath. However, practitioners are typically instructed to do so in a gentle, kind way, showing self-compassion. One reason for this is to counterbalance any tendencies to criticize oneself for being so poor at performing a seemingly easy task such as observing one's breath. Such criticism would only lead the practitioner further away from letting attention rest on the process of breathing, and, as such, is counterproductive.

Thus self-compassion can be crucial in helping the practitioner to bring back, over and over again, a wandering mind without getting frustrated, de-motivated, angry, and caught up in conceptual self-criticism. If leaders can transfer this attitude towards failures into their work context, developing self-compassion may allow leaders to persist in the face of repeated failures, without criticising themselves too harshly or giving up prematurely because of frustration. Moreover, the transfer from self- to other-compassion may naturally occur and as leaders experience the value of being compassionate towards themselves they may become more compassionate towards their colleagues and subordinates.

However, in a more shallow ("McMindfulness") approach, self-compassion in mindfulness practice could be viewed from an instrumental perspective as a means to an end: As an emotion applied with the purpose of being more mindful (in the sense of returning attention to the intended object of attention). As such, one can wonder if the kind of self-compassion in mindfulness practice is different from self-compassion (and perhaps compassion) espoused and practiced in contemplative traditions through techniques such as loving-kindness meditation (LKM). LKM is a contemplative, emotion-focused practice in which one directs positive feelings of loving-kindness toward the self and real or imagined others using attention, visualization, and emotion. It is designed to promote feelings of warmth, caring, and kindness toward the self and others (Salzberg, 1995). Thus, in LKM feelings such as (self) compassion are the purpose, or end of the practice, not a means to attain personal goals.

From this perspective, an empirical question is whether leaders who have applied self-compassion as a means to an end in their mindfulness practice may also attempt to "act compassionately" in an *interpersonal* context. For instance, emotional labor research has highlighted that employees modify their expressions (surface acting) when interacting with coworkers (Kim, Bhave & Glomb, 2013). Along similar lines, leaders may engage in faking

expressions of compassion in order to to gain subordinates' goodwill and obligation rather than from a genuine sense of concern for their colleagues. Such an instrumental approach to compassion may be problematic. First, it may serve "unwholesome" ends. Second, in general, regulating emotional expressions will also be detrimental to leaders' well-being (Grandey, Diefendorff, & Rupp, 2013). An alternative to regulating expressions is to regulate feelings—deep acting—aligns with the objectives of LKM—generating feelings of compassion. It is plausible, then, that through deep acting leaders may experience and exhibit "true" compassion that helps them to focus on the fulfillment of other-oriented goals. Furthermore, emotional labor research reveals that deep acting, in general, is also related to superior well-being (Grandey, et al. 2013). In sum, it stands to reason that through the genuine practice of self-compassion, even if from an instrumental motivation at first, actual self- and other-directed compassion are experienced and developed through MBIs. Hopefully, future research will be able to shed more light on this question.

Witnessing Awareness

Witnessing awareness is another important dimension of mindfulness and mindfulness practice. This dimension has been referred to by various names including cognitive defusion, non-reactivity, non-judgment, decentering, reperceiving, metacognition, witnessing, or simply awareness. In essence, it refers to the awareness of, or witnessing of an experience (where the experience often is a thought or an emotion). For example, rather than "only" breathing and paying attention to breathing, mindfulness also involves an awareness that one is breathing. The direct consequence of this witnessing of experience is a certain dis-identification with the experience. In other words, the experience is recognized as separate from the self, the self and the experience are "defused" and thus exerts less control over behavior.

This dimension of mindfulness has been emphasized particularly in clinical approaches such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Fletcher & Hayes, 2005) and MBCT (Segal et al, 2013) because of its potential to address mental health problems such as (relapse of) depression. Arguably, many mental health problems are partly due to a fusion of self with experiences, to the point at which individuals identify too closely with negative thoughts, emotions and affect they experience. This fusion can severely bias and limit individuals' awareness of what kind of choices and actions are available to them. For example, a person may be having the thought "I am no good at anything. I am a useless person". Taking a witnessing stance to this thought allows a person create some distance and recognize the thought as a thought, rather than "the truth". Thus, while not necessarily changing the content of experiences such as thoughts and emotions, witnessing awareness changes one's relation to these experiences.

This change in perspective is considered by many to be crucial for the mental health benefits of mindfulness. However, we would argue that the benefits extend beyond clinical populations and wellbeing-related consequences. First, defusion may lead to a clearer, less biased, less restrictive view of the environment and the self, as the person de-identifies with what is going on inside and out. This may provide substantial benefits for making more informed choices. Second, the reduced identification may lead to less ego involvement and ego defensiveness of the leader, which could result in actions that are targeted more at organizational goals rather than protecting or advancing the leader's ego. Third, being able to "just notice" things without jumping to premature judgments and conclusions may be very valuable in interpersonal interactions with employees. In essence, a witnessing stance may allow leaders to create a sense of (safe) space for employees to articulate their ideas, concerns, and feedback. As a result, relationships with employees may improve as may employee productivity.

In addition to these potential benefits, we can speculate that taking a stance of witnessing awareness may carry some less desirable consequences from an organization's perspective. We present two such possible consequences: perceived leader apathy and reduced organizational commitment. First, followers may perceive a leader's stance of witnessing awareness as a sign that their leader is apathetic or indifferent. It has been argued that successful managers are those who influence employee behaviour by embracing emotion and being evocative (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Brief & Weiss, 2002). However, witnessing awareness calls for a disidentification of the self from emotional experience. This may create the impression of being detached and unemotional. Emotions in general fulfil social functions, such as signaling beliefs and intentions and coordinating group goals (Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Thus, leaders who appear to be unemotional may be less effective in influencing followers. Without intending to do so, the leader practising witnessing awareness may be viewed as apathetic and their passion for work may be called into question. On the other side, it could also be that witnessing awareness enables leaders to express (or not express) emotions more consistently with their intentions. Thus, rather than making leaders unemotional, it could be that such leaders become better able to express emotions that are motivating and engaging. Future empirical research will hopefully shed light at this issue.

Drawing on the burnout literature, one could speculate that in some cases, witnessing awareness may have similar effects on organizational commitment as distancing. Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) suggest that when people are burnt out, they distance themselves emotionally and cognitively from their work as a way to cope. Although distancing is a reaction to negative work experiences and these negative work experiences motivate reduced commitment, part of the reduced commitment is a result of work featuring weakly in an employee's identity. Similarly, witnessing awareness provides psychological distance between the self and experience such that identity is not strongly founded on work. Thus,

witnessing awareness may lead to reduced organizational commitment as identification with the organization is reduced.

Clarity

Clarity is sometimes claimed as a dimension of mindfulness, or at least a proximal effect. We again argue that clarity may not necessarily lead to "better" leader behaviours. Clarity is likely a resource that helps leaders implement their goals--to the extent that goals become clearer, they are more likely to be implemented. However, seeing one's goals more clearly may not necessarily affect the goals itself. One possibility is that clarity does indeed help a leader become aware when lower-level goals conflict with more deeply held goals, values, and beliefs (e.g., not to use other people as a means to an end). However, another possibility is that such clarity may not lead to conflict, as these goals may not conflict with deeply held higher-order goals and beliefs (e.g. employees' welfare depending on a company's survival). For instance, a firm leader may gain clarity that laying off employees is the best approach to minimize the firm's payroll and take action with less hesitation. Due to the clarity, the leaders may decide to overlook other possible approaches, that are less certain to be successful, and psychological pain and financial difficulty that the laid off employees will have to endure.

In addition, if a person is deeply convinced of something (e.g., that certain people are inferior), gaining more clarity on this belief may lead to more harmful behaviors (e.g., discrimination). For instance, a leader may gain clarity on the belief that young workers are more skilful and comfortable adapting to the firm's new technology. Thus, during a crisis time, the leaders may act on the clearer belief and overlook elder employees' loyalty and years of their contributions to the firm. In this sense, less clarity on unwholesome goals could be preferable from a societal perspective. Thus, to give an example, a leader who is clear that

his or her goal is to become the “number one” executive or company may be more likely to resort to extreme and unethical means to achieve this goal, which is held with such clarity.

Of course, we would expect that a genuine, holistic mindfulness practice would help most if not all practitioners to connect with a deeper purpose, to feel more connected to others and the environment, and by realizing the causes of suffering and happiness becomes more strongly committed to wholesome values; and that only in the case of a shallow practice of mindfulness, or perhaps for beginning practitioners, the above-mentioned possibility becomes more likely.

Mindfulness Practice

We have already discussed several aspects of mindfulness particularly related to the practice of mindfulness such as intention. However, we argue that over and above these aspects, mindfulness as a practice may have further effects on leaders. Many MBIs demand a daily formal practice, such as a sitting meditation. The expected duration of practice varies depending on the MBI, but can be substantial (e.g., 40 minutes). Perhaps more important than the duration of each session, managing to establish and maintain a regular formal practice might bring several benefits.

Most obviously, such practice should increase the practitioner’s ability to be mindful during practice and throughout the day and at work. In addition, such training might increase self-regulatory capacity--a crucial resource for leaders (Tsui & Ashford, 1994). Further, increased self-efficacy may result from the experience of being able to sit, despite all the difficulties, as well as from a perceived progress and sense of control over one’s mind and impulses.

Beyond such concrete benefits, a formal practice of mindfulness may allow leaders to attain a sense of balance between doing and being. Leaders are expected to be active, to “do things”, and their workdays are full of activities. Mindfulness practice provides a welcome,

and perhaps much needed, opportunity to switch from a doing mode to a being mode. This may allow leaders to recharge their energies—a phenomenon aligned with the conservations of resources perspective (Hobfoll, 1989). It may also provide them with a more balanced approach to decision making and action stemming from a fuller appreciation of life in its different modalities.

Whereas all of the above suggest beneficial effects of mindfulness practice, especially at the intraindividual level, we can think of at least two potential negative effects. First, to the extent that leaders do not live up to self- or trainer-set expectations of formal practice and progress in practice, this may add to their frustration and stress, and thus have negative effects on their wellbeing as well as their ability to perform.

Second, at the interindividual level, having a regular practice of mindfulness may lead to a sense of separation from those who do not, or perhaps even worse, a sense of superiority. Social identification theory (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) suggests that individuals who practice mindfulness may socially categorize according to their practice and distinguish themselves from others who do not practice mindfulness. Along with this categorization, an enhancement of the in-group status happens organically as a function of implicit self-image concerns. In addition, being only introduced to the mainstream relatively recently as well as being generally positively received, mindfulness enjoys vogue status. In turn, the perceived distinctiveness and prestige of the group may fuel the salience of the non-practicing out-group. In other words, leaders who formally practice mindfulness as part of an MBI may consider themselves to be part of a special group of people, superior to others. The resulting superiority could potentially have negative effects on their relationships with “non-practitioners”. Interestingly, it could also be that such an effect could at least partly be driven not by leaders’ feelings of superiority, but by employees believing, counterfactually, that their leaders may consider themselves superior as a result of engaging in some form of

"spiritual" practice, even if leaders do not think of themselves as superior. The distinction of an in-group of mindfulness practitioners from an outcome of non-practitioners may potentially also result in some form of (subconscious) bias such that leaders favour employees who are part of the in-group. Clearly, at this point, the above considerations are highly speculative and empirical research is needed to bring more clarity to the more indirect effects of formal mindfulness practice.

Mindfulness as Resource versus Mindfulness as Value

Overall, much of the above discussion can be summarized by making a distinction between goals/values and resources. Our analysis suggests that mindfulness and mindfulness practice can often be viewed as leading to an increase in resources available to pursue a leader's goals and values. These resources include self-regulatory skills and capacities related to the self-regulation of attention, emotions, and behaviors, to energy, clarity, self-compassion, and mental balance. Thus, one could argue that mindfulness makes people more resourceful (ACT takes a related view differentiating mindfulness and acceptance processes, from values-infused commitment and behavioral activation processes, see e.g., Hayes, 2004). This view is consistent with some empirical research. For example, Chatzisarantis and Hagger (2007) found that the more mindful someone was, the more likely this person was to implement intentions to exercise more.

However, in order to evaluate whether the effect of mindfulness in leadership is beneficial a consideration of leader values and goals is also required, and perhaps even more important than a consideration of resources. The reason is that resources are the means to achieve certain ends. Thus, a lack of resources such as mindfulness might be considered a problem only when leaders pursue wholesome goals, but might be considered at least socially desirable when leaders pursue unwholesome goals that are antisocial or selfish at the expense

of others. To give a perhaps dramatic example, mindfulness may make it more likely that a sniper hits a target.

While the positive effect of mindfulness on resources seems fairly clear to us, evidence for positive effects of mindfulness on goals and values appears less clear. One possible way in which mindfulness may influence values and goals is through witnessing awareness. Specifically, by reducing ego involvement, leaders' goals and efforts oriented towards ego advancement and protection might be reduced. Similarly, Atkins and Parker (2012) have argued that mindfulness can increase prosocial values and actions by reducing defensiveness in emotionally difficult situations through the processes of self-affirmation (Sherman & Cohen, 2006) and self-transcendence (Crocker, Niiya, & Mischkowski, 2008). Another possible pathway may be that by developing an attitude of self-compassion and extending this attitude towards others, leaders' goals and values may shift towards accepting and helping others.

Overall, from the perspective of mindfulness as a resource one can propose that mindfulness can serve both "wholesome" and "unwholesome" goals (these and other concerns have prompted cautions about "McMindfulness"). This is perhaps different from prevailing voices that suggest only positive effects of mindfulness and mindfulness practice and do not make a distinction between mindfulness and "right mindfulness" (mindfulness within a certain ethical framework). However, we believe that, perhaps particularly because of this contradiction, this presents an interesting area for future research.

Mindfulness and Leadership Styles

The leadership literature discusses a plethora of leader styles (transactional versus transformational leadership, task versus relationship oriented leadership, etc.). Rather than trying to identify linkages between mindfulness and all leadership styles, we adopt a selective approach. In particular, we consider three leadership styles—authentic, charismatic, and

servant—that are widely considered in contemporary conceptualizations of leadership, that have an inherent link to mindfulness, and whose effectiveness can be regulated by mindfulness. We also take this opportunity to further clarify goal quality (wholesome versus unwholesome goals) by contrasting the dimensions of mindfulness with the different leadership styles.

Authentic Leadership

One leadership style that seems closely related to mindfulness is authentic leadership. Luthans and Avolio (2003) define authentic leadership as a multi-level and multi-dimensional construct. Specifically, they view authentic leadership as a process drawing from both personal resources of the leader (i.e. confidence, optimism, hope and resilience), as well as the organizational context (i.e. an open organizational climate and trigger events or challenges), which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of both leaders and followers.

Research in authentic leadership suggests that leaders' self-awareness, unbiased processing and clarity behaviours and relational authenticity fosters and strengthens exchange relationships between the leader and followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). The findings suggest that authentic leaders have strong influence on follower enactment of leaders' goals. For example, authentic leadership has been shown to relate positively to follower identification (Wong, Spence Laschinger, & Cummings, 2010), and strengthened trust in leadership (Wong & Cummings, 2009).

Given how authentic leadership has been defined, its relationship to mindfulness is straightforward. First, awareness is a key ingredient to both leading authentically and to being mindful. One difference is that awareness is considered a cause or enabler of authentic leadership in that literature, whereas in the mindfulness literature, awareness is a dimension

of mindfulness. Thus, the relation between mindfulness and authentic leadership can be considered one of cause and effect.

This leads us to another important difference: whereas the literature on authentic leadership is relatively mute on how leaders can develop awareness, research on mindfulness focuses substantially on practices that increase awareness. In this sense, mindfulness practice can be considered as an avenue to develop authentic leader behavior. As we detail below, mindfulness, either as a skill, trait or a cultivated practice, may facilitate authentic leadership.

The dimensions of present-moment attention and witnessing awareness should facilitate leader self-awareness; a leader who is paying attention to his internal states will be self-aware, providing the building blocks for clarity and self-disclosure in authentic relationships. Further, another important process by which authentic leadership influences follower outcomes is through providing developmental feedback and support for followers' self-determination, which in order to do so, leaders themselves have to adopt a learning goal orientation grounded in unbiased processing (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahgang., 2005). To this end, the nonjudging aspects of mindfulness may also facilitate authentic leadership.

Interestingly, authenticity is not explicitly advocated in MBIs such as MBSR. This brings us to another potential difference between mindfulness and authentic leadership (in addition to one being the cause, the other the effect). Specifically, the literature on authentic leadership largely endorses this leadership style as desirable and exhorts leaders to be authentic. In contract, MBIs tend to emphasize observing, witnessing, and non-judging. Thus, leaders would be encouraged to become more aware and observe their typical (and untypical) leadership behaviors in an open, non-judging way. By doing so in a patient, non-striving, and self-compassionate way, MBIs argue that, over time, insight will emerge into ways in which one's behaviors may or may not be appropriate, providing an impetus to explore and experiment with other behaviors. Notice the difference of doing so as compared to starting

from the premise that leading authentically is good and not doing so is bad. In a way, leading mindfully allows for great flexibility to deploy different leader behaviors based on the needs of the specific situation (consistent with contingency approaches to leadership).

Charismatic Leadership

The literature on charismatic leadership proposes that followers' attribution of charismatic qualities to a leader, as jointly determined by leaders' behaviour, expertise and dimensions of the situation, can greatly influence followers (Conger, 1989; Conger & Kanungo, 1998). Charismatic leadership is characterized by the leaders' appearance of being extraordinary and visionary and by followers' personal identification (Conger; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993), social identification (Conger, Kanungo, & Menon, 2000) and internalization of new values and attitudes (Conger). In addition, charismatic leadership is also characterized by emotion contagion, with charismatic leaders being perceived as having higher emotional expressiveness (Bono & Ilies, 2006) and employing emotional appeals to values.

We see at least two ways in which a leader's mindfulness might be related to how charismatic that leader is perceived to be. First, the ability to be fully in the "here and now" with another person may contribute to a leader's charisma. Leaders' presence could be perceived as extraordinary. It could also lead to personal and social identification as presence allows leaders to quickly create a connection with others and as employees respond positively to the full attention given to them. Indeed, it seems that many political leaders have developed the ability to connect with, and leave a positive impression on, others through presence. This clearly seems to be a use of mindfulness, in the sense of present-moment attention, as a resource. Whether this resource is being put to wholesome ends, and simply used as a means to whatever ends the leader may pursue is an entirely different questions, and at least for a number of real-life charismatic leaders, questionable.

Second, given emotional contagion is an important process of charismatic leadership, the increased ability of mindful leaders to regulate their emotions could also be used in the service of charismatic leadership. We highlighted in the previous section that one aspect of mindful practice relates to non-evaluation of inner experiences (i.e. defusion). The result is a certain level of detachment, as identification with experiences, such as emotions is reduced. Thus, a deliberate utilization of it may allow a leader to reduce negative emotions, and maintain positive emotions. Specifically, being more mindful may allow leaders to regulate emotion, such as downregulating negative affect and upregulating positive affect in order to give an impression of enthusiasm and confidence that charismatic leaders are often perceived as portraying. Drawing from research in emotional labour (Bhave & Glomb, in press; Grandey, Kern, & Frone, 2007), leaders can be expected to manage emotional displays to internal audiences, such as subordinates, peers, superiors, (Gardner & Avolio, 1998), and to influence these audience to follow them in pursuit of desired goals. Thus, mindfulness may help align leader emotional response with followers' expectations of a charismatic leader.

In line with our distinction between wholesome and unwholesome goals, there has also been a distinction between positive and negative charismatics within the charismatic leadership literature. On one hand, positive charismatics focus on a socialized power orientation, with the emphasis of followership towards ideology rather than the leader. On the other hand, negative charismatics focus on a personalized power orientation, with the emphasis of followership towards themselves rather than to the guiding ideology (House & Howell, 1992; Musser, 1987). Thus, negative charismatics may possibly hide behind a concerted effort at regulating emotion through mindfulness, for example, masking anger at a small misstep and create impressions of magnanimity and temperance.

Overall, while we can see that certain dimensions of mindfulness may allow leaders to be perceived as more charismatic, we also see important differences. Perhaps most

importantly, while mindfulness may be used in the service of charismatic leadership, most mindfulness practitioners will probably not pursue being perceived as charismatic. Relatedly, the intention of most MBIs is to help improve emotion regulation skills for the purpose of wellbeing (e.g., managing stress, reducing negative affect). Further, the witnessing awareness aspect of mindfulness may lead to lower perceptions of charisma in that a mindful leader may experience and display less intense emotions.

Servant Leadership

In 1970, Greenleaf coined the term "servant leadership". His essay served as an introduction to an idea of leaders who lead by serving and fostering the development of followers, put the leaders' interests behind, and, subsequently, gain trust and develop long-term relationships with their followers. The concept of servant leadership received great interest, as it challenged the then conventional notions of what it took to be an effective leader.

Recently, the concept of servant leadership has re-emerged and attracted wide attention from both organizational researchers and practitioners. Liden and colleagues (2008) identified eight dimensions of servant leadership: emotional healing, creating value for the community, conceptual skills, empowering, helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first, behaving ethically, and servanthood. Essentially, servant leadership places a strong emphasis on leaders' selfless behaviors and motivation to serve others (Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; Liden et al.).

Based on this conceptualization, it appears that being a servant leader would require a considerable level of awareness of self, others, and of relations between self and others. For example, leaders would have to be aware of their own needs, employees' needs, as well as how they can support their employees. Such awareness should be facilitated by both state mindfulness and mindfulness practice.

Perhaps even more importantly, servant leadership requires a certain detachment and transcendence of the immediate pursuit of personal needs, and to prioritize those of others. While we do not believe that mindfulness and mindfulness practice necessarily lead to such an attitude, it seems that they could be very helpful for those wanting to be servant leaders. In particular, the ability to defuse and detach from self-serving thought and emotion processes as well as the insights gained from observing the consequences of one's actions without judging may be essential in learning, over time, to replace self-serving behaviors with other-serving ones.

On the other side, by emphasizing the self, several aspects of mindfulness practice may be potential obstacles to developing servant leadership. These include the self-focused nature of many mindfulness practices, such as observing one's breath, the focus on compassion towards self while practicing, as well as most broadly the fact that most participants in MBIs likely participate for self-related reasons, such as enjoying better health for themselves (rather than other-related reasons which may be more common for practitioners of, for example, loving-kindness meditation). Nevertheless, it could be that an attitude of other-orientation and compassion for others develops through mindfulness practice even without an explicit intention towards this effect. Clearly, research is needed to learn more about these matters.

Mindfulness and Leadership Development

Having selectively explored some relations between mindfulness and leadership behaviors and styles, we now turn to an even higher level of abstraction: leadership development. One way to view leadership development is as a process of moving from one leadership style to another, more "developed" one, as in Kegan's (1982) theory of constructive development of the self, which has subsequently been applied to leadership development (e.g., Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). Thus, in this section, we suggest how

mindfulness may affect the developmental process of leadership focusing specifically on how witnessing awareness quality of mindfulness could play an important role in facilitating constructive development.

There are many constructive development theories that have been used to explain leadership development. Examples of other well-known theories are Loevinger's stages of ego development (Loevinger, 1976) and Lawrence Kohlberg's stage of moral development (Kohlberg, 1971). However, Kegan's theory perhaps demonstrates particularly well how the witnessing awareness quality of mindfulness can help facilitating self-awareness and subsequent leadership improvement. In addition, the theory can be applied to various important leadership styles, such as the transactional and transformational styles of leadership, in the management literature.

According to Kegan's theory of constructive development people evolve through five developmental stages (impulsive, imperial, interpersonal, institutional, and interindividual balance) as a result of life experiences, life crises, or trigger events. In each subsequent stage, individuals become able to view more and more of their experiences (thoughts, emotions, desires) as separate their self (in the language of the theory, what was considered a subject, and part of the self, becomes an object). When this happens, individuals can think more objectively about these experiences and as a result can make more reasoned choices. The group of experiences individuals learn to treat more objectively as the progress through the five stages are: reflexes, immediate needs and feelings, personal objectives and goals, interpersonal ties and reciprocal obligations, and finally individual values and standards.

The theory of constructive development has been used as a framework to understand leadership development. For example, Kuhnert and Lewis (1987) suggested that the differences between transactional and transformational styles of leadership can be understood as differences in development stages, involving progression from the second to the fourth

stage of development. Initially, transactional leaders, at the second stage of development, construct their reality around personal goals and agendas, and tend to assume that others are also driven by similar motives. At this point, leaders are incapable of perceiving their interpersonal ties and mutual obligations with their followers, and tend to evaluate their followers in term of adherence to their personal goals and agendas.

In the third stage, leaders can now perceive personal objectives and goals as objects (i.e., distinct from the self) and thus begin to think about their objectives and goals with critical distance, coordinate their agendas with those of their followers, and make sacrifices to maintain their relationships with their followers. As leaders start to become transformational they begin to inspire their followers to consider the value of their work from other perspectives beyond external rewards such as financial compensation. In the fourth stage, interpersonal ties become objects and leaders' values and standards the perspective from which leaders create meaning and make decisions. At this stage, leaders espouse values of fairness, trustworthiness, and self-sacrifice to inspire their followers.

Along similar lines, Phipps (2010) argued that it is impossible for leaders to become servant leaders until, at least, the third stage where leaders are able to perceive individual objectives and goals as objects. During the fourth stage, while still constrained by personal values and standards, leaders are able to think critically and meaningfully about their interpersonal ties and reciprocal obligations with their followers. As leaders progress into the fifth stage, they become capable of serving others without enforcing their values and standards onto themselves and others.

From this perspective, an evolving self is thus central to leadership development and the different stages are associated with different leadership styles. There seems to be a clear connection between the theory of constructive development and mindfulness. Specifically, as described previously, an important aspect of mindfulness is witnessing awareness, or the

ability to observe experiences non-judgmentally and with detachment. Such experiences could be anything, from internal feelings, thoughts, or values, to external interactions. Thus, witnessing awareness may allow leaders to re-perceive experiences that were in the subject domain of identification as being in the object domain, where they are perceived as distinct from the self.

For instance, it could be that as a leaders move to higher stages of development, they manage to bring witnessing awareness to experiences that are more and more difficult to dis-identify from. Thus, for example, as leaders are able to bring witnessing awareness to their personal objectives and goals, the insights and new perspectives gained allow them to move into the next stage, where now the challenge becomes to apply the same kind of awareness to interpersonal ties and reciprocal obligations.

Overall, it seems that by facilitating the shifting of experiences from identification ("subject") to some detachment ("object"), mindfulness, in the form of witnessing awareness, provides a way of constructive development that can allow leaders to progress through different stages of leadership styles. One interesting difference between a mindfulness-based approach and many leadership development approaches seems to be in the basis of development. Whereas in much leader development theories development is hypothesized to be caused by life experiences, crises, triggers or "leadership moments", mindfulness-based approaches emphasize regular, disciplined, formal and informal mindfulness practices. Thus, the latter place much more emphasis on intentional activities under the control of the leader (e.g., sitting daily for a breath meditation), as compared to external events such as triggers. We feel that this is one advantage of mindfulness-based approaches and hope that future research will explore the potential of MBIs for leadership development.

Conclusions

Obviously, the predictions resulting from our analyses and speculations in the preceding sections will need to be tested empirically in order to truly gain more insights into the relation between mindfulness and leadership behaviors, styles, development, and outcomes. One interesting aspect of following down this path would be that this research would move away from largely looking at main effects and treating mindfulness as the sole independent variable. Instead, in many designs, mindfulness would have to be looked at as a moderating variable and interactive effects would have to be investigated. In particular, as we suggested repeatedly, mindfulness can often be considered as a (self-regulatory) resource and this resources, we argue, is likely to interact with values and goals to influence behaviors. This view is consistent with Chatzisarantis and Hagger's (2007) study of mindfulness as moderator that facilitates the implementation of intention.

A potential challenge in such research will be to examine MBIs as moderators, as moderating variables are more commonly measured (even when independent variables are manipulated). However, while perhaps less common, we see no inherent problem with such an approach. For example, in a study leaders' goals, values, and/or intentions could be measured (or manipulated, e.g., via priming) while participants are randomly assigned to mindfulness practice and control conditions in order to examine the potential moderating role of mindfulness.

In closing, we believe that mindfulness and mindfulness practice have tremendous potential for not only understanding processes of leadership and leadership development, but also improving leadership in practice. However, our analysis suggests that to achieve that potential, mindfulness may need to be accompanied by the "right" goals and values, that is, ethical and organizationally and societally valued goals. In the presence of unwholesome goals we suggest that mindfulness may actually contribute to negative consequence. The reason, as we pointed out, is that we view several dimensions of mindfulness largely as a

(self-regulatory) resource that can be directed towards wholesome or unwholesome purposes. We are hopeful that in most cases, leaders have ethical values and goals, and this mindfulness can support them in achieving these goals and as a result be a force for good.

An alternative possibility is that the development and formal and informal practice of mindfulness and the development of values, ethics, other-orientation, and compassion go hand-in-hand with each other. Moreover, we also suggest that the mindfulness dimensions of witnessing awareness, or defusion, or re-perceiving, holds particular promise in going beyond being a resource to changing the fundamental way in which leaders relate to themselves, others, and the external environment. As such, this aspect of mindfulness seems to have particular potential for leadership development and may deserve particular emphasis in MBIs for leadership development.

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